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Initial Teaching Alphabet for Teaching Phonetics

This application claims priority to provisional application 60/411270, filed on September 16, 2002, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference.

Field of The Invention

The field of the invention is phonics.

Background of The Invention

English and other modern Western languages are predominantly phonetic languages. Unfortunately, they have been corrupted over time by the importation of foreign spellings and sounds in ways that significantly defeat the originally simple correlation between letters and sounds. Today, for example, of the 26 letters in the normal English alphabet only one (v) has a unique sound (i.e. a letter that is always pronounced the same). These inconsistencies create learning barriers for children and adults.

Learning to read using phonics is clearly superior to the sight-word reading touted by some during the last few decades. Disputes remain, however, in how to teach phonics effectively. Scholars generally agree on the first step of associating sounds with characters, but then the opinions immediately diverge. One strategy is to teach ordinary Western lettering (A-Z) in combination with a series of rules that specify the circumstances under which the same letters are spoken with different sounds. Such "rules based phonics" can be effective, especially where the rules are incorporated into card and board games. Examples are The Phonics Game™ and Hooked on Phonics™.

Unfortunately, rules based phonics has a large number of rules and an even larger number of exceptions to those rules. To circumvent that problem several scholars have adopted a second strategy that uses an initial teaching alphabet (ITA). An ITA is a substantially pure phonemic alphabet, in which each letter or character always represents the same sound. One of the earliest ITAs was the Pitman™ alphabet shown in **Figure 1**. A currently popular ITA is the Deseret™ alphabet shown in **Figure 2**. Other ITAs are the Training Wheels™ and Quickscrip alphabets shown in **Figures 3 and 4**, respectively. Other examples of ITAs are Akse™, Altscript™, Karmeli™, Mesa™, Moon™, and Unifon™ alphabets.

Numerous advantages have been attributed to the use of initial teaching alphabets. Proponents claim that the use of an ITA makes reading easier and more enjoyable for beginners, and that users rapidly progress to more varied and more difficult text sources. Proponents also claim that ITAs provide increased comprehension, reduced incidence of dyslexia, as well as improved writing and spelling. Still other claimed benefits are ready acceptance and even enthusiasm by teachers.

Detractors argue that the use of an initial teaching alphabet requires users to learn to read twice; once with the ITA and once with a standard alphabet. Certainly there is a dearth of reading materials published in any of the ITAs, so that readers may experience considerable frustration in their inability to read many comics, newspapers and other printed materials. Parents often find it difficult to teach reading to their children using an ITA, and there are, of course, significant problems when a child moves from a school system that uses an ITA to a system that uses a standard alphabet.

These problems are all exacerbated in proportion to the extent of the differences between the ITA being used and a standard alphabet. Thus, someone learning to read using the Deseret or Quicksript alphabets can be expected to have a much more difficult time transitioning to a standard alphabet than would the same person using the Pitman or the Training Wheels alphabets.

There are some ITAs that rely entirely, or almost entirely, on the letters of a standard alphabet. In those cases each of the letters is given a specific, unvarying sound, which distinguishes the ITA from the ordinary alphabet, in which letters have varying sounds in different words. **Figure 5** shows the same text in six different ITAs, using substantially only the 26 characters of the English alphabet.

The problem there, of course, is that the spelling of the words is inconsistent with the ordinary spelling. The closest appears to be RiteSpell, but even there the spelling of almost every word is inconsistent with ordinary spelling. Thus, even the use of ITAs that correspond closely to a standard alphabet requires the user to mentally relearn a great many spellings when moving on to use of the standard alphabet.

Thus, there is still a need to provide systems and methods for teaching reading that utilize an ITA that consists primarily or entirely of the letters of a standard alphabet, while still depicting words with their ordinary spellings.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides systems and methods in which words are represented using ordinary spelling, and adjacently positioned clarifying symbols that consist primarily or entirely of the letters of a standard alphabet are used to assist in sounding out the words.

In preferred embodiments, single ones of the vowel letters are used to represent corresponding short vowel sounds, and combinations of the vowel letters are used to represent long vowel sounds. Clarifying symbols need not be used for every letter of every word, and indeed in preferred embodiments many words are written without any clarifying symbols at all.

In the most preferred embodiments the clarifying symbols comprise an Initial Teaching Alphabet consisting of the standard 26 letters of the English alphabet (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z). Contemplated ITA preferably have less than 44 phonograms, more preferably less than 40 phonograms, and still more preferably 36 phonograms. To retain the relatively low number of phonograms, differences in case of the letters are not used to represent differences in sound. Thus, the 26 letters identified above include the corresponding upper case letters.

As used herein adjacent positioning means that the clarifying symbols are at least as close, and preferably closer, to the corresponding letters in the written word than to other letters of the word. This excludes phonetic spelling aids found in dictionaries, in which an entire word is followed by an entire phonetic spelling of the word. In especially preferred embodiments the clarifying symbols are written directly below the corresponding letters of the word.

The teaching of reading using the inventive systems and methods can be advantageously facilitated using various prompts, such as underlining to highlight a plurality of the letters that form a blended sound, and coloration to show that certain letters are either silent or are sounded according to the adjacent phonetic symbol. The prompts are thus

distinct from the symbols of the ITA because they merely highlight differences in pronunciation as an aid to reading. They do not control the pronunciation.

Various objects, features, aspects and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments of the invention, along with the accompanying drawings in which like numerals represent like components.

Brief Description of The Drawings

Figure 1 is a chart of the Pitman alphabet.

Figure 2 is a chart of the Deseret alphabet.

Figure 3 is a chart of the Training Wheels alphabet.

Figure 4 is a chart of the Quickscrip alphabet.

Figure 5 is a table showing the same text written according to different initial teaching alphabets.

Figure 6 is a chart showing sounds of a preferred initial teaching alphabet.

Figure 7 is a chart distinguishing phonograms in the ITA of Figure 6 that represent short vowel sounds from those that represent long vowel sounds .

Figure 8 is a chart correlating a reduced set of phonograms with images.

Figure 9 is a page from a training book, in this case describing a bingo type game.

Figure 10 is another page from a training book, in this case providing instructions on pronunciation of consonants, and more generally the blending of sounds into words.

Figure 11 is a plan drawing of a sample peeker window.

Figure 12 is another page from a sample training book, in this case providing instructions on reading practice, and providing a list of words upon which the child can practice.

Figure 13 is a sample page from a listing of common words.

Figure 14 is another page from a training book, in this case providing instruction on learning to read two-letter blends.

Figure 15 shows a page used to play bingo using two letter blends.

Figure 16 is another page from a training book, providing additional instructions on using preferred prompts, including faded out letters.

Figure 17 is another page from a training book, describing the use of faded out letters to designate which letters are silent versus which letters are pronounced.

Figure 18 is another page from a training book, focusing on separating and accenting syllables.

Figure 19 is another page from a training book, providing additional instruction and practice in pronouncing vowels.

Detailed Description

The preferred Initial Teaching Alphabet, along with related materials and methods comprise a system, which for the time being is completed to be marketed under the rubric "Rocket Phonics™". Other names may be employed over time for the entire system or parts thereof, but for convenience the name Rocket Phonics™ is used herein from time to time as shorthand for the entire system as currently developed.

The goal of Rocket Phonics™ is to create independent readers; readers who can recognize and comprehend in print most of their spoken vocabulary. Since reading is often taught to children and students, the terms "child" and "student" are used herein interchangeably to refer to any person using some or all of the system to learn reading skills. Those terms, however, should be construed herein as euphemisms that includes all persons using the system regardless of age or occupation.

Rocket Phonics™ generally has a three-step approach: (1) teach a preferred initial teaching alphabet (ITA) in which each symbol has a unique sound, (2) teach sound blending, and (3) get the student reading.

Step 1, Teaching A Preferred Initial Teaching Alphabet

In a first step, Rocket Phonics provides an ITA of 36 symbols. The preferred ITA is designed to retain as much as possible the shape of the word, so the match between shape and sound is retained. For this reason the preferred ITA uses only the 24 letters of the English alphabet and combinations. The 36 sounds of the preferred ITA are depicted in **Figure 6**. Note that some of the sounds are depicted by repeated instances of the same letter. Thus, the symbol "mmm" is used to represent the sound of "m" in "mom". In practice, either the three-letter representation or the single letter representation can be used for the sound. Indeed, the practice materials of the lessons generally depict the sound "m" using the single letter, while the chart on Figure 6 shows the three letter representation. This inconsistency is maintained because it is a standard convention used to differentiate the sound of a letter over its name.

Figure 7 provides a chart used to conveniently compare the symbols used for the short and long vowel sounds in the ITA of rocket Phonics™.

It is important to appreciate that the inventive concepts herein are not limited to one particular ITA. The present invention contemplates ITAs using different letter combinations from those shown in Figure 6. Thus, an alternative contemplated ITA could use the double letter "ee" to represent the long "e", as opposed to the combination "ea" to represent that same sound.

It is highly preferred that most of the phonograms are letters in a standard alphabet, such as the 26 letters (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z) in the English alphabet. To retain the relatively low number of phonograms, differences in case of the letters are not used to represent differences in sound. Thus, the 26 letters identified above include the corresponding upper case letters. It is, however, contemplated that an alternative ITA could use at least some symbols that are not part of the ordinary (i.e. standard) English alphabet. For example, an alternative ITA could use a bar over a single vowel to represent the long sound of the vowel, and the vowel without the bar to represent the short sound of the vowel. Similarly, an alternative ITA could use the capital letter "E" to represent the long vowel sound, and the small letter "e" to represent the short vowel sound.

Where the inventive concepts are applied to languages other than English, it is preferred that the symbols of the corresponding ITAs are also substantially limited to the basic letters of the appropriate alphabets.

Although the most preferred ITA for the present invention uses only 36 symbols (23 of the 26 letters of the English alphabet, plus 13 multi-letter combinations), it is contemplated that alternative ITAs would contain other numbers of symbols. Indeed, many scholars consider there to be 40, 44, or even more than 44 distinct sounds in the English language. Those claims are not disputed herein. Instead, one underlying feature of certain aspects of the inventive subject matter is an appreciation that many of the sounds in the English language are so close to one another as to make it disadvantageous to teach the distinctions among those sounds during the early phases of learning to read. Thus, preferred ITAs consist of less than 44 phonograms, more preferably less than 40 phonograms, and still more preferably 36 phonograms.

Various picture materials have been found to aid in correlating sounds with the symbols of the ITA. **Figure 8** shows a page from a training book used to teach such sound-symbol correlations. In this instance nine symbols of the ITA (the letters a, f, k, l, m, h, e, i, and n) are shown next to pictures of objects where the sounds of the symbols are included in the names of the objects. Other pages (not shown) are used to correlate other symbols with pictures and sounds as part of the first step of teaching an initial teaching alphabet.

Figure 9 is another page from a training book, in this case describing a bingo type game that can be used to practice the symbols shown in **Figure 8**. Many different games are contemplated, some of which include flash cards with sound-symbols on one side of the card and a picture or diagram on the flip side.

Step 2, Teaching Sound Blending

Figure 10 is another page from a training book, in this case providing instructions on pronunciation of consonants, and more generally the blending of sounds into words. Certainly these and any of the other instructions described herein could be compressed, expanded, re-written or in many other ways revised. Thus, although the instructions here describe pronouncing of consonants using the "ih" sound rather than the traditional "uh" sound, instructions on use of the latter are also contemplated.

The "peeker" referenced at the end of the page of **Figure 10** is a card having a window through which a child views a word and its associated adjacently positions symbols. Selecting an appropriate size for the window relative to the text being read assists in blocking out other words, which in turn assists in focusing the child on the word being read. A sample

peeker is shown in **Figure 11**. The particular peeker has a line drawing of a rocket, and a window measuring approximately 4 cm by 1.7 cm.

Step 3, Getting The Student Reading.

After a child reads a word in the ITA a few times, the child is provided with the normal spelling to see if he can read it. **Figure 12** is yet another page from a sample training book, in this case providing instructions on reading practice, and providing a list of words upon which the child can practice. A longer listing of common words is preferably included in the training materials. **Figure 13** is a sample page of such a listing.

Figure 14 depicts yet another page from a training book. Here the focus is on learning to read two-letter blends. This page also distinguishes two of the prompts, solid underlining and dotted or dashed underlining. **Figure 15** shows a page used to play bingo using two letter blends.

Figure 16 provides additional instructions on using preferred prompts, including faded out letters. As used herein, the term "prompt" refers to aspects that are not part of the ITA. Prompts do not themselves represent sounds, nor do they alter the way sounds are pronounced. This distinguishes them from, for example, the accent symbols in French. The currently preferred prompts include coloration and faded printing of letters of the word being pronounced, as well as underlining of letters in the words or adjacent ITA symbols.

Figures 17 and 18 provide yet additional prompting instructions, as well as some practice words. **Figure 17** describes the use of faded out letters to designate which letters are silent versus which letters are pronounced. **Figure 18** focuses on separating and accenting syllables. Here, a diamond is used to separate the syllables, and heavier type is used to identify which syllables are accented.

It should be appreciated that alternative contemplated systems could be completely devoid of prompts, or could use different or additional prompts. Some children, for example, may well find prompts entirely distracting and annoying, and their parent may prefer to use systems that omit prompts altogether. For those children it would be useful to provide materials that omit the prompts altogether. On the other hand, selection of the preferred prompts was undertaken with considerable effort, and is not a mere design choice. Experimentation has established that underlining, for example, is much better tolerated than

overlining. Experimentation has also established that the use of colored and faded letters provides increased retention by 57%.

The practice words of Figures 17 and 18 exemplify the currently most preferred presentation of the words and corresponding ITA. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that not all of the letters of a word are accompanied by adjacent ITA designations, but that many or even all of the words include some prompts.

Those skilled in the art will also appreciate that the ITA designations are positioned adjacent to the letters that they clarify. As used herein adjacent positioning means that the clarifying symbols are at least as close, and preferably closer, to the corresponding letters in the written word than to other letters of the word. This excludes phonetic spelling aids found in dictionaries, in which an entire word is followed by an entire phonetic spelling of the word. In especially preferred embodiments the clarifying symbols are written directly below the corresponding letters of the word.

Figure 19 is once again a page from a training book. Here the page provides additional instruction and practice in pronouncing vowels.

Systems and Methods

The Rocket Phonics™ concepts can be embodied in any number of ways; in training books, in teacher/parent guides, in videos, in computer programs and so forth. It is certainly preferred that the concepts be presented in a series of games and suggested variations, because children tend to spend more “time on task” if they are having fun.

A preferred method involves teaching phonetic reading using an initial teaching alphabet mostly or entirely consisting of the letters of the English alphabet, in which single ones of the letters represent corresponding short vowel sounds, and even more preferably in which combinations of the letters represent long vowel sounds. display a line of words with ordinary spelling, in which some of letters in the words are accompanied by adjacent clarifying ones of the letters. In another aspect, preferred methods include displaying a line of words with ordinary spelling, and using symbols of the initial teaching alphabet to accompany some of the letters of the words. The words can be advantageously arranged in sentences of at least five words, and the symbols of the ITA can advantageously be placed

below selected letters of at least some of the words as aids in pronunciation of the selected words.

Thus, specific embodiments and applications of phonics teaching methods and apparatus have been disclosed. It should be apparent, however, to those skilled in the art that many more modifications besides those already described are possible without departing from the inventive concepts herein. The inventive subject matter, therefore, is not to be restricted except in the spirit of the appended claims. Moreover, in interpreting both the specification and the claims, all terms should be interpreted in the broadest possible manner consistent with the context. In particular, the terms "comprises" and "comprising" should be interpreted as referring to elements, components, or steps in a non-exclusive manner, indicating that the referenced elements, components, or steps may be present, or utilized, or combined with other elements, components, or steps that are not expressly referenced.

CLAIMS

1. A system for teaching phonics, comprising a visual representation of a plurality of words using ordinary spelling, and adjacently positioned symbols that consist primarily or entirely of the letters of a standard alphabet are used assist in sounding out the words.
2. The system of claim 1 wherein the clarifying symbols are omitted for at least some of the letters.
3. The system of claim 1 wherein at least 90% of the clarifying symbols consists of standard letters.
4. The system of claim 1 wherein all of the clarifying symbols consist of standard letters.
5. The system of claim 1 wherein the standard letters and the clarifying symbols together comprise an initial teaching alphabet consisting of less than 44 phonograms.
6. The system of claim 1 wherein the standard letters and the clarifying symbols together comprise an initial teaching alphabet consisting of 36 phonograms.
7. The system of claim 1 further comprising a prompt to show when a plurality of the letters form a blended sound.
8. The system of claim 7 wherein the prompt comprises underlining of the plurality of the letters.
9. The system of claim 1 further comprising a coloration of a selected one of the standard letters to show that such letter is silent in the word.
10. The system of claim 1 further comprising a modification of a selected one of the standard letters to show that such letter is either silent or sounds according to the adjacent phonetic symbol.
11. The system of claim 10 wherein the modification comprises representing the selected letter using a particular coloration.

12. The system of claim 1 wherein differences in case of the letters are not used to represent differences in sound.
13. The system of claim 1 wherein the adjacently positioned clarifying symbols are placed below corresponding ones of the standard letters of at least some of the words.
14. The system of claim 1 further comprising a reading assist card having a window sized and dimensioned to focus attention on a subset of the words and corresponding ones of the adjacently positioned clarifying symbols.
15. An initial teaching alphabet consisting substantially of the letters a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z, and combinations of the letters, in which words are regularly written using their ordinary spellings.
16. A method of teaching phonetic reading comprising using the initial teaching alphabet of claim 15 in which single ones of the letters represent corresponding short vowel sounds.
17. A method of teaching phonetic reading comprising using the initial teaching alphabet of claim 15 in which combinations of the letters represent long vowel sounds.
18. A method of teaching phonetic reading comprising displaying a line of words with ordinary spelling, and using symbols of the initial teaching alphabet of claim 15 to accompany some of the letters of the words.
19. A method of teaching phonetic reading comprising displaying display a sentence of at least five words with ordinary spelling, and placing symbols of initial teaching alphabet below selected ones of the words as aids in pronunciation of the selected words.
20. The method of claim 19 further comprising displaying at least one of the words without a corresponding one of the pronunciation aids.

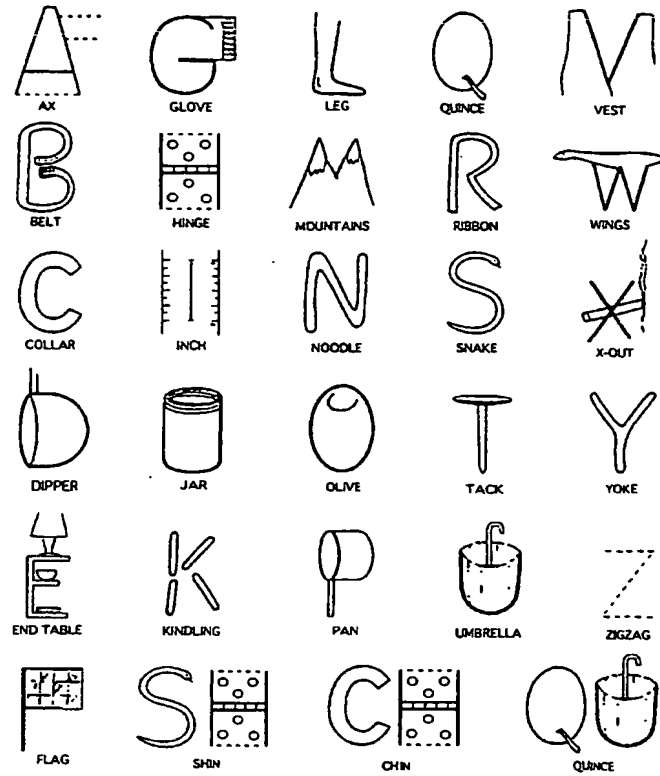
b	c	d	f	g	h	j	k	l	m	n
bed	cat	dog	fish	goat	hat	jug	key	lion	man	nest
p	r	s	t	v	w	y	z	a	e	i
pet	rock	sun	table	voice	win	yet	zip	apple	engine	insect
o	u	æ	ee	ie	œ	uc	wh	ch	sh	th
hot	umbrella	angel	eel	ice	oat	uniform	wheel	chair	shoe	thumb
th	au	oi	ou	ng	s	3	r	a	ω	ω
that	auto	oil	owl	ring	dogs	garage	bird	father	book	moon

PITMAN ALPHABET
FIGURE 1 (PRIOR ART)

ðə	long i (e as in machine)	ɪɪ	short i (i as in it)	əə	ay (as in eye)
ɛɛ	long e (e as in grey)	ɹɹ	short e (e as in desert)	əə	ow (ow as in cow)
əə	long a (a as in art)	ɹɹ	short a (a as in cat)	ʊʊ	wu (w as in wonder)
əə	long ah (au as in aught)	ɹɹ	short ah (o as in cot)	ʏʏ	yee (y as in you)
oo	long o (o as in tone)	ɹɹ	short o (o as in woman)		
oo	long oo (oo as in moo)	ɹɹ	short oo (oo as in book)		
ʏʏ	h (h as in hurrah)	əə	gay (g as in good)	əə	esh (sh as in short)
ɹɹ	pee (p as in pet)	ɹɹ	ef (f as in France)	əə	zhee (as in measure)
əə	bee (b as in bee)	əə	yee (y as in voice)	ɹɹ	er (r as in ride)
ɹɹ	tee (t as in teach)	əə	eth (th as in think)	əə	el (l as in letter)
əə	dee (d as in Deseret)	əə	thee (th as in they)	əə	em (m as in Macintosh)
əə	chee (ch as in cheese)	əə	es (s as in said)	əə	en (n as in nice)
əə	jee (j as in John)	əə	zee (z as in zebra)	əə	eng (ng as in sing)
əə	kay (k as in kitten)				

DESERET ALPHABET
FIGURE 2 (PRIOR ART)

BASIC LETTER SHAPES AND SOUNDS



TRAINING WHEELS ALPHABET

FIGURE 3 (PRIOR ART)

up	be	to	do	can	go	think	the	for	of	so	is	
[p]	[b]	[t]	[d]	[k]	[g]	[θ]	[ð]	[f]	[v]	[s]	[z]	
show	vision	which	just	you	we	have	what	ink	will	are	me	and
[ʃ]	[ʒ]	[tʃ]	[dʒ]	[j]	[w]	[h]	[hw]	[ŋ]	[l]	[r]	[m]	[n]
busy	even	ever	able	as	my	calm	haul	on	oil	among/us		
[ɪ]	[i:]	[e]	[eɪ]	[æ]	[aɪ]	[ɑ:]	[ɔ:]	[ɒ]	[ɔɪ]	[ə/ʌ]		
now	toe	pull	boot	use	pair	ark	or	err/array	ian	ear		
[aʊ]	[əʊ]	[ʊ]	[u:]	[ju:]	[eə]	[ɑ:r]	[ɔ:r]	[ɜ:r/ər]	[ɪə]	[ɪər]		

QUICKSCRIPT ALPHABET

FIGURE 4 (PRIOR ART)

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Chekt Klipt Spel3	Spanglish
W'ns 'apon 'a tym x biutifl dotr 'v 'a gret m'aji5n wantd mor p'rlz tu pu.t 'amu.3 h'r tre2iurz."Lu'k thru x sentr 'v x mun 'wen i.t iz blu," sed h'r m'uxr in ansr tu h'r kweschn, "Yu myt fynd yur hartz dizyr."	Wans apon a taim the biutifl dotr ov a greyt majishn wanted mor prlz tu pwt amang hr trezhiurz."Lwk thru the centr ov the mun wen it iz blu," sed hr mathr in ansr tu hr queschn, "Yu mait faind yur hartz dizair."
ALC Fonetik	Nyu Romaji
Wuns upon a tiem, the buetiful dauter of a graet majishan wonted mor perls to puut amung her trezhers. "Luuk thru the senter of the moon when it is bloo," sed her muther in anser to her qestion, "You miet fiend yur harts dezier."	Wans apon a taim the biutifel dooter ov a greyt majishn waanted mor perlz tu put amang her treezhyurz. "Luk thruu dhe ceenter ov dhe muun hwen it iz bluu," seed her mather in aenser tuu her queeschen," Yuu mait faind yur haartz dizair."
Truespel	OGD positional
Wuns upawn u tiem, thu byuetifool dawtur ov u graet majishan waantud mor perls to poot amung her trezhurs. "Luuk thru the senter awv thu muen when it iz blue," sed hur muthur in ansur to hur kwestion, "Yue miet fiend yur haarts dezier."	Wuns upon a tym, the biutiful dawter ov a grait majition wonted mor perls tu puut amung her trezhers. "Lwk thru the senter ov the moon when it is blu," sed her muther in anser tu her question, "Yu myt fynd iur harts desyr."
RiteSpell	Igliz
Wuns upon a time, the biutiful dawter ov a grate maajishun wonted mor perls tu poot amung her trezhers. "Look throe the center of the mune when it is blue." sed her muther in anser tue her queschn, "Yu mite fined yure harts desire."	W'ns 'pon ' taim d biutifl dotr 'v ' gret m'jiz'n want'd mor p'rlz tu put 'muq h'r trezhiurz."Luk thru d sentr 'v d mun wen it iz blu," sed h'r m'udr in ansr tu h'r kweschn, "Yu m'yt fynd yur hartz diz'yr."

Figure 5 (prior art)

36 Sounds of Guffanti Initial Teaching Alphabet

<i>ah</i> as in apple	<i>o</i> as in otter	<i>uh</i> as in duck	<i>ea</i> as in eagle
<i>fff</i> as in fish	<i>rrr</i> as in rat	<i>ch</i> as in chip	<i>oa</i> as in goat
<i>kkk</i> as in kangaroo	<i>sss</i> as in sun	<i>vih</i> as in van	<i>oo</i> as in food
<i>lll</i> as in lion	<i>ttt</i> as in tiger	<i>sh</i> as in ship	<i>oy</i> as in toy
<i>mmm</i> as in mom	<i>zzz</i> as in zebra	<i>wih</i> as in wolf	<i>ow</i> as in cow
<i>hhh</i> as in horse	<i>jih</i> as in jet	<i>th</i> as in thimble	<i>ou</i> as in foot
<i>eh</i> as in egg	<i>gih</i> as in gift	<i>yih</i> as in yak	<i>ie</i> as in tie
<i>ih</i> as in itch	<i>dih</i> as in dog	<i>ay</i> as in ape	<i>th</i> as in bathe
<i>nnn</i> as in nest	<i>bih</i> as in bee	<i>pih</i> as in pig	<i>zh</i> as in treasure

FIGURE 6

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	<u>Short vowel sounds</u>	<u>Long vowel sounds</u>
a	<i>ah</i> as in apple	<i>ay</i> as in ape
e	<i>eh</i> as in egg	<i>ea</i> as in eagle
i	<i>ih</i> as in itch	<i>ie</i> as in tie
o	<i>o</i> as in otter	<i>oa</i> as in goat
u	<i>uh</i> as in duck	<i>(y)oo</i> as in us

FIGURE 7






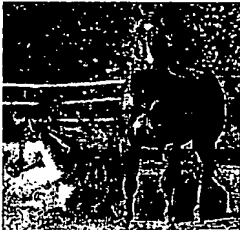



a		f	
	apple		fish
k		l	
	kangaroo		lion
m		h	
	mom		horse
e		i	
	egg		itch
n			
	nest		

FIGURE 8

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BINGO

Purpose:

Have fun and learn the nine sounds these symbols make. Additional instructions for Bingo are at the beginning of this lesson.

Roles:

Caller: Calls out the sounds the letter makes using the picture name if needed to clarify. Example: Caller says "eh as in egg." After Bingo is called out by a player check the sounds by calling them out again.

Player: Places Bingo chips on the board in the appropriate square. Note: Several letters appear more than once. Let the player cover only one letter each time it is called. Which one he covers is his choice. When checking your Bingo remove chip as caller calls out each sound.

Variations: Player removes chips to check Bingo, and pronounces each sound. Play to cover all the squares.

a	e	i	l
n	f	l	m
h	m	a	k
i	k	n	e

FIGURE 9

Blending Sounds into Words

Many consonants are sounded by adding a vowel. Traditionally, the vowel used is *uh*. But *uh* is a very strong vowel and hard to drop when blending. For this reason use an *ih* sound, as: *bih*, *dih*, *gih*, *pih*. When blending a word like *bad* be sure the student substitutes the vowel *ah* for the vowel *ih*, placed there so the consonant can be heard. For example, blending *bad* goes:

Bih + ah = bah (It is hard for some students to replace the *ih* with another vowel. They will tend to keep the *ih* and *ah* saying *bihah*. If this is your problem have them place their fingers on their lips and yours and say *b* [with no *ih*] and then *ih* and then blend them. Often a child can feel the difference and they don't need to hear the *ih* to feel the *b*.)

then ***bah + dih = badih***

And finally ***bad***.

This process is very important with multi-syllabic words. Blend each syllable rather than blending each letter from first to last.

For example, *yesterday*:

yih + eh = yeh,

yeh + sss = yes

then *tih + eh = teh,*

teh + rrr = ter

Now blend the two syllables

yes + ter = yester ... And so on.

Make sure the student is blending out loud. Sometimes the student will blend a word he knows, and pronounce it, yet still not recognize it. Work with him until he does. (You might ask him to say it again faster – or ask if he knows that word. Or ask what that word means.) If he reads a word new to him, tell him what the word means and use it in a sentence.

Using the Peeker:

To a new reader a page full of words is overwhelming. She starts to search the page for something familiar instead of reading the first word at the top left corner. The peeker helps her take one word at a time and practice blending these sounds into words she knows. If it is fun for the child, let him decorate his peeker.

FIGURE 10

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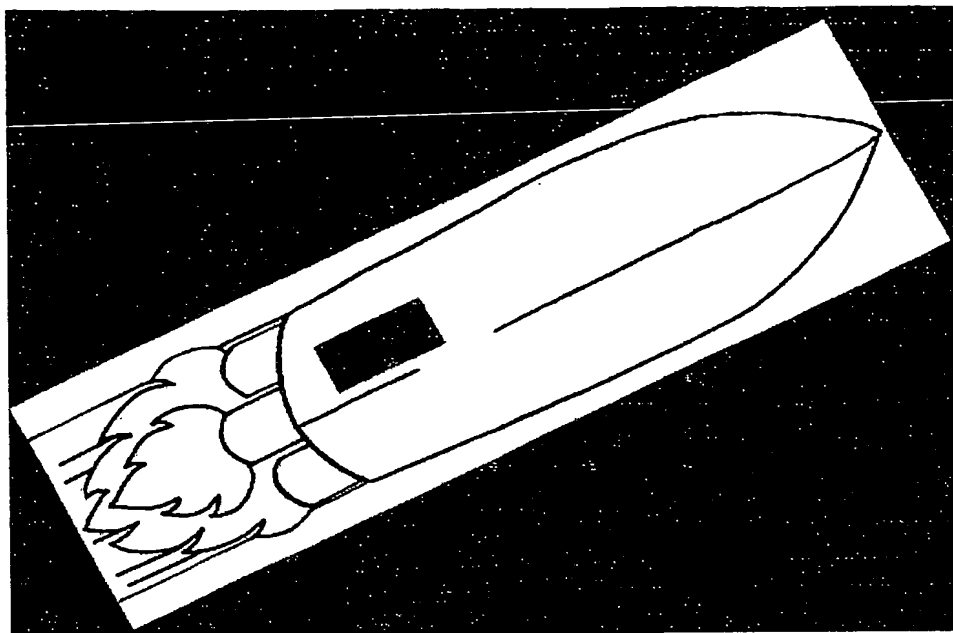


FIGURE 11

Reading Practice

On this page, your child will begin reading words. Exciting! Tell your student, "We're going to begin reading now!"

1. Show the child how to use the peeker to reveal the first word only, *an*.
2. Ask your student to say out loud each symbol separately. (As needed, refer to the symbol cards or the page of the first nine symbols.) Your child will say "ah", and "nī".
3. Praise and encourage your child.
4. Now ask your child to blend the sounds by saying them faster, "ah-nī", and again, "an".
5. Demonstrate this blending as much as you need to so your child understands.
6. After your child reads *an*, move the peeker to the right to reveal *man*. Ask your child to sound out each symbol, "mī", "ah" and "nī". Then ask her to blend "mī" and "ah". After she says "mah", show her how to add the "nī" sound next to say "man".

That's it! Like magic, your child is reading. Continue through the top row and the rest of the rows. Explain words your student doesn't know or read the meaning from a dictionary if you prefer.

(Note: a few of these words are names. Because we have not yet introduced capital letters, we've written these words using lower case letters.)

an	man	fan	lank	hank
am	ham	lam	hill	nil
ill	mill	fill	kill	
in	kin	fin	inn	
ink	mink	kink	link	fink
ken	men	hen	len	hem
him	kim	nell	fell	if

FIGURE 12

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First Common Word List

u k u u

a a__	ear__	I__	off__	the
the__		le		u ea
u ay				
add__	eat__	if__	on__	them__
am__	end__	in__	play__	then__
an__	fast__	it__	ran__	thing__
and__	fat__	job__	red__	think__
ask__	fill__	jump__	run__	this__
at__	fish__	just__	sat__	too__
bad__	food__	last__	say__	top__
bed__	full__	left__	set__	town__
best__	get__	let__	shall__	up__
big__	got__	long__	sing__	upon__
boy__	had__	man__	soon__	us__
bring__	hand__	may__	stand__	way__
brown__	hat__	mean__	stop__	well__
but__	hear__	men__	such__	will__
day__	help__	much__	tell__	wish__
dear__	her__	must__	ten__	with__
did__	him__	near__	than__	yes__
dog__	hot__	not__	thank__	yet__
down__	how__	now__	that__	your__
each__				

Figure 13

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Two-Letter Blends

To show some sounds we create a blend symbol. We use two letters and underline them. For example, we will use ay for the a sound in *ape*.

Some words will have two blends next to each other. To help you spot the two, we usually split up the underlining of one. For example: ea + ch = each.

Also, be sure to spot the differences between two similar blends made with *th*:

th as in thimble is a smoother sound;

th as in that vibrates more.

Hear the difference?

th: thin think bathth pathth

th: them then that this

FIGURE 14

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Bingo

<u>ay</u>	e	i	u
<u>th</u>	<u>ch</u>	y	<u>sh</u>
w	v	<u>sh</u>	<u>th</u>
p	<u>ch</u>	u	<u>ay</u>

FIGURE 15

Prompting Rules

1. **Never sound faded-out letters.**
2. **Sound out the symbol underneath the faded-out letter.** For example: in the word *made* the *a* is faded and an ay is underneath so the sound is like the *a* in *ape* rather than the *a* in *apple*. The *e* is faded with nothing underneath because this letter makes no sound in this word.
3. **A two-letter symbol underlined makes one sound.** In the word *may* we will simply underline the *ay* rather than fade both and retype them underneath with the underline.

Capital letters have the same sound as lower case letters.

Syllables: When possible we prefer to leave multi-syllable not divided into syllables. We find this speeds development of sight words. However, experience has shown us some words are learned more easily if we divide them. Thus, you will find some words divided and some not.

Apply:

Play the Simon Says Game. Have the student read the sentence. The teacher, with or without the students, can do the funny action. Be sure to do each action that Simon says because the child deserves an emotional reward after each sentence. Remember, teach reading so that your students have fun and they will learn to enjoy reading.

Note: Some of the commands are a straightforward action, like "put your hands on your head". Others involve pantomime, and the teacher will need to instruct the students to pretend to do the action, such as "(pretend to) hold a dog and brush his long fur."

In these lessons you also will find some jokes and riddles to read and enjoy together. Your student may read them all, or you can take turns. The important point is to have fun reading!

Sight word test: At the end of lesson 2.5 you are given a prompted list of common words. After she reads these competently, ask the student to read the unprompted First Common Word List included in this kit. Mark which ones she can read and retest the missed words after 3.1. After each word appears on the list of common words we will stop prompting it. If your students consistently have difficulty reading the majority of these words, contact us for additional prompted practice.

FIGURE 16

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Words are not always spelled the way they sound. Our next step is to correct the words to show how they sound. We call this prompting. We print prompted words in blue.

We prompt three ways: First, we underline to show when two letters are a blended sound, like this: day. The a and y make only one sound. Second, we gray out letters that make no sound, like this: *when*. Third, for those letters that make completely different sounds we gray out those letters and place the sounds underneath, like this: *laugh*.

down eat much know give a the again
from

any me be own like by my can come do
e ea ea ea oa ie ie ie k k u

call all good of old or for so go no
most
k o o ou uv oa oa oa oa oa oa oa

as has his been would could stood took
book
z z z i k ou ou ou

FIGURE 17

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Capital letters: The capital letters are listed at the end of Simon Says in this lesson. Before this list, below each capital letter you will find its lower case symbol. They both sound the same! Practice recognizing both forms.

SWO 2004/025603 PCT/US2003/030790
Syllables: To make longer words easier to read, we have divided some of them into separate sound units, such as yes♦ter♦day.

Accented Syllables: We will also place in heavier type the syllable that is accented, or stressed. Look at these two pronunciations:

pro♦duce (As in: Fruits are in the produce section.)
oa oo s

pro♦duce (As in: A factory can produce thousands of toys each day.)
u oo s

You can hear the accent on the first syllable in the first word, and on the second syllable in the second word.

Funny Things to Read

f ea th z oo r

What bow can never be tied?
w u oa k u ea

– a rain♦bow.
u ay oa

What has bark, but no bite?
w u z o oa ie

– a tree.
u ea

What is the best way to paint a river?
w u z u oo ay u u

-- with water♦colors.
o u k u u z

Simon says, "Wiggle five fingers."
s ie u e z w ul ie u z

Simon says, "Wiggle four fingers."
s ie u e z w ul oa u z

Simon says, "Say please and thank you."
s ie u e z s z oo

Simon says, "Say I am funny."
s ie u e z s ie ea

Simon says, "Say what time it is."
s ie u e z s u ie z

Simon says, "You should sit down."
s ie u e z y oo

Simon says, "Boys can get up."
s ie u e z b z k

Simon says, "Find the color brown."
s ie u e z f ie u k u u

Simon says, "Look full of hope."
s ie u e z l ou uv oa

Simon says, "Look right, then left."
s ie u e z l ou ie

Simon says, "Tell seven people 'Hi'."
s ie u e z t ea ul h ie

Simon says, "Part your hair on one side."
s ie u e z p o ay wu ie

Simon says, "Pre+tend to think hard."
s ie u e z p i oo o

Simon says, "Pre+tend you sat on a bee."
s ie u e z p i oo u ea

WFO 2004/025603-1 PCT/US2003/030790
Simon says, "First, touch something black and white."

s ie u e z f u u ie

Simon says, "Second, point out something green."

s ie u e z s k u oy ow u ea

Simon says, "Third, show me the color red."

s ie u e z th u oa ea u k u u

Simon says, "Nod 'yes' if you like to work hard."

s ie u e z n oo ie oo u o

Simon says, "Point to a pair of brown eyes."

s ie u e z p oy oo u ay uv ie z

Simon says, "Pre♦tend to carry your coat in the cold."

s ie u e z p i oo k ea k u k oa

Simon says, "Pre♦tend to wash a hat in warm water."

s ie u e z p i oo o u o o u

Simon says, "Pre♦tend to stand before a fine fire."

s ie u e z p i oo i oa u ie ie

Simon says, "Pre♦tend to write a love letter."

s ie u e z p i oo ie u u u

Simon says, "Pre♦tend to walk like old men."

s ie u e z p i oo o ie oa

Simon says, "Put your hand on your head."

s ie u e z p ou

Simon says, "Fly, fast and far away from here."

s ie u e z f ie o u u ea

Pre♦tend to eat an apple. Another big apple.

p i oo ul u u u ul

The Capital Letters

aA bB cC dD eE fF gG hH iI jJ kK lL mM
nN oO pP qQ rR sS tT uU vV wW xX yY
zZ

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WO 2004/025603 PCT/US2003/030790
Syllables. To make longer words easier to read, we
have divided some of them into separate sound units,
such as yes♦ter♦day.

Accented Syllables: We will also place in heavier type
the syllable that is accented, or stressed. Look at these
two pronounciations:

pro♦duce (As in: Fruits are in the produce section.)
 oa oo s

pro♦duce (As in: A factory can produce thousands of toys each day.)
 u oo s

You can hear the accent on the first syllable in the
first word, and on the second syllable in the second
word.

FIGURE 18

Vowels are letters that have sounds that let other letters be heard more clearly. Vowels in the English alphabet are *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* and sometimes *y*. Every word needs at least one vowel to be heard. Unfortunately, many letters, especially vowels, change their sound when they are around vowels. For now, just notice that vowels are often prompted.

Wise Advice from Kids

ie z ie s u z

Don't sneeze in front of your mother when you're eating
oa ea u uv u u
 crackers.
 k u z

Puppies still have bad breath even after eating a mint.
ea z ea u u

Never try to baptize a cat.
 u ie oo ie u k

Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball
oa u ea z oa u ay o
 bat.

FIGURE 19

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US03/30790

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : G09B 17/00

US CL : 434/185

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
U.S. : 434/156,159,167-178,185

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
Please See Continuation Sheet

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 6,077,080 A (RAI) 20 June 2000 (20.06.2000) Figures 2-7, 10, and 14, column 1, line 40-line 61; column 2, line 47 - column 6, line 64	1-14, 19 and 20
X	US 4,884,972 A (GAPER) 05 December 1989 (05.12.1989) Figures 2c-2p; column 7, line 39 through column 8, line 16	15-18
A	US 4,193,212 A (AL-KUFAISHI) 18 March 1980 (18.03.1980), full text	1-20
A	US 6,126,447 A (ENGELBRITE) 03 October 2000 (03.10.2000), full text	1-20
A	US 4,650,423 A (SPRAGUE et al) 17 March 1987 (17.03.1987), full text	1-20

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☐ See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

30 January 2004 (30.01.2004)

Date of mailing of the international search report

11 FEB 2004

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Tech. Center 3700

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

PCT/US03/30790

Continuation of Item 4 of the first sheet:

Title is not descriptive to the invention claimed.

NEW TITLE:

Initial Teaching Alphabet for Teaching Phonetics

Continuation of B. FIELDS SEARCHED Item 3:

USPAT, US-PGPUB, EPO, JPO, DERWENT: search terms: initial learning alphabet, phonetic representation, phonetics, phonetic alphabet

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